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DEFENSE DEPARTMENT COMPLIES WITH SENATOR ALLARD'S DEMANDS ON PUEBLO DEPOT PROJECT

Transportation of chemical weapons ruled out, redesign effort to continue

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) said Tuesday he is glad the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has finally “seen the light” and decided to move forward with the cleanup of chemical weapons stockpiles at the Pueblo Depot and to destroy the weapons on site, rather than pursue the option of moving them elsewhere for destruction.

“Finally! Common sense has prevailed. The Department of Defense has finally listened to my concerns and the concerns of the Pueblo community. Now we can focus on getting this project under way,” Senator Allard said. “This is the right decision, and it is time to move forward with destroying the weapons as soon as possible.”

The Department of Defense announced Tuesday in a letter from Under Secretary of Defense Michael Wynne that a decision has been made regarding the chemical weapons destruction at Pueblo that rules out any plan to move the materials. In addition, the DoD will continue its redesign effort for the project, release all funding that was appropriated in prior years for use at the site, and adjust its FY 2007 budget plan to reflect renewed commitment to the project.

Two weeks ago, Senator Allard joined with U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) in adding a provision to the FY 2005 Supplemental Appropriations Act now before the Senate that protects \$372.38 million previously appropriated but not spent by the U.S. Department of Defense for cleaning up chemical weapons stockpiles at the Pueblo Depot in Colorado and the Blue Grass Depot in Kentucky. The Act, to be voted on by the full Senate this week, requires the program manager of the two projects to spend or contract for \$100 million-worth of work at the sites in no more than 120 days.

The supplemental appropriations legislation also forbids the expenditure of the funding provided for Pueblo and Blue Grass on any other program, and it specifically forbids any expenditure whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, on any study related to the transportation of chemical weapons across state lines.

“The department will use the funds Congress has previously provided to move forward with the design and construction at both sites. It has given up on pointless studies of alternative demilitarization technologies. Now we can complete the design process for both sites, and get on with the business of cleaning up the Pueblo Depot,” Senator Allard said.